

# NIOSH ALERT

## Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers

### WARNING!

Exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust during construction activities can cause serious or fatal respiratory disease.

#### Take the following steps to protect yourself from exposure to crystalline silica:

- Be aware of the health effects of respirable crystalline silica (see *NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers*).
- Participate in any medical examinations, air monitoring, or training programs offered by your employer.
- Substitute less hazardous abrasive-blasting materials for those containing crystalline silica.
- If substitution is not possible, use engineering controls such as blast-cleaning machines, cabinets, dust collectors, wet methods, and local exhaust ventilation to minimize exposures to silica dust.
- Always use the dust control systems and keep them well maintained.
- Be aware that the highest silica concentrations may occur inside enclosed areas during concrete or masonry sawing or abrasive blasting.
- Use Type CE pressure-demand or positive-pressure, abrasive-blasting respirators when sandblasting.

- Change into disposable or washable work clothes at the worksite.
- Do not eat, drink, or use tobacco products in dusty areas such as sandblasting areas.
- Wash hands and face before eating, drinking, or smoking outside dusty areas.
- Shower and change into clean clothes before leaving the worksite.



Construction worker sawing masonry without dust control or a respirator.

Please tear out and post. Distribute copies to workers.

See back of sheet to order complete Alert.

For additional information, see ***NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers*** [DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 96-112]. Single copies of the Alert are available free from the following:

Publications Dissemination, EID  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
4676 Columbia Parkway  
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Fax number: (513) 533-8573  
Phone number: 1-800-35-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674)  
E-mail: [pubstaf@niosdt1.em.cdc.gov](mailto:pubstaf@niosdt1.em.cdc.gov)



U.S Department of Health and Human Services  
Public Health Service  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health